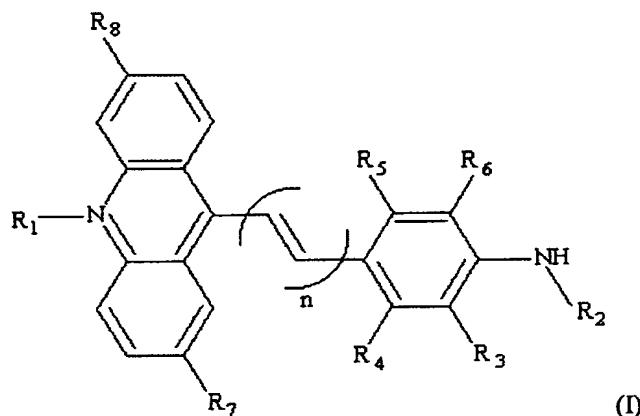


Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A chromogenic enzyme substrate for detecting amino-peptidase activity in microorganisms or for determining whether at least one bacterium ~~belongs to theis Gram-positive group or to the Gram-negative group according to the color thereof, wherein the substrate characterized in that it has the formula (I) below:~~



wherein in which:

R₁ is nothing or an alkyl, allyl or aryl group;

R₂ ~~is eonists of~~ at least one amino acid, preferably alanine;

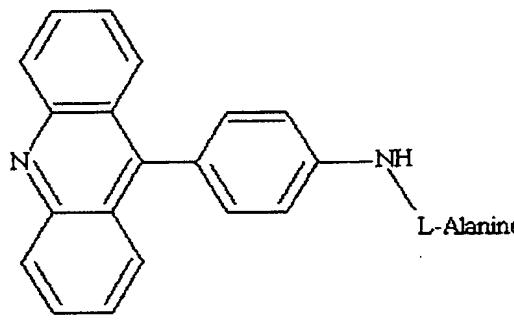
R₃, R₄, R₅ and R₆ ~~areeconsist~~, independently of one another, of H- or O-alkyl; O-alkyl, preferably O-CH₃;

R₇ ~~is eonists of~~ H, O-CH₃, alkyl or halogen;

R₈ ~~is eonists of~~ H or Cl;

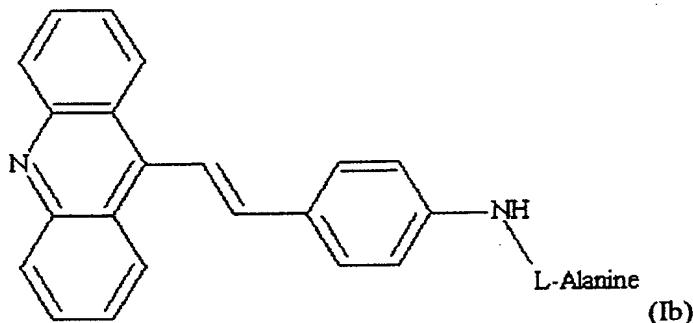
n is an integer corresponding to 0 or 1.

2. (Currently Amended) The substrate as claimed in claim 1, having the characterized in that it has formula (Ia) below:



(Ia)

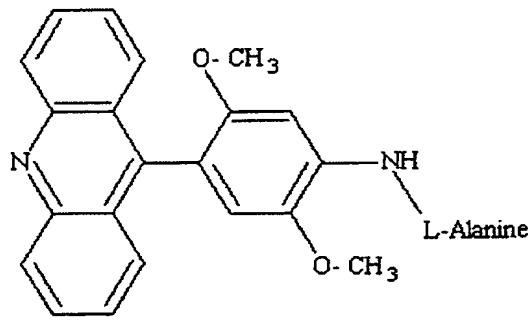
or in that it has or formula (Ib) below:



(Ib)

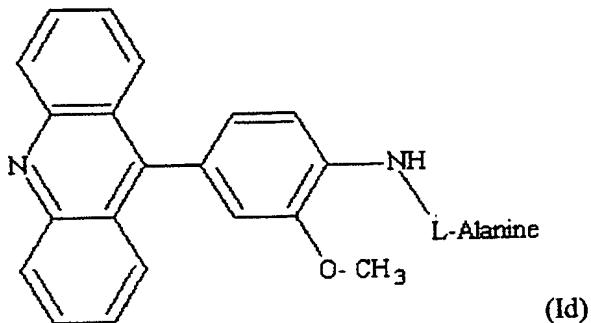
3. (Currently Amended) The substrate as claimed in claim 1, wherein characterized in that R₁ is a methyl or allyl group.

4. (Currently Amended) The substrate as claimed in claim 1, having the characterized in that it has formula (Ic) below:



(Ic)

or in that it has or formula (Id) below:



(Id)

5. (Currently Amended) The substrate as claimed in claim 1, wherein characterized in that R₂ or the L-alanine is coupled to a blocking agent.

6. (Currently Amended) A culture medium using comprising at least one chromogenic enzyme substrate as claimed in claim 1, ~~alone or in combination with at least one other enzyme substrate specific for an enzyme activity that is other than that detected by the substrate according to the invention.~~

7. (Currently Amended) The medium as claimed in claim 6, wherein the medium is characterized in that it consists of a gelled medium.

8.-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method for detecting at least one aminopeptidase activity in microorganisms, comprising characterized in that it consists in:

a) providing a culture medium as claimed in claim 6;

b) seeding the culture medium with a biological sample to be tested;

c) incubating the seeded culture medium; leaving it to incubate, and

d) visualizing the presence of at least one aminopeptidase activity, alone or in combination with at least one other enzyme activity different from an aminopeptidase activity.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for differentiating Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria in terms of whether they belong to microorganisms of the Gram-positive type or to microorganisms of the Gram-negative type, characterized in that it consists in, comprising:

- a) providing a culture medium as claimed in claim 6;
- b) seeding the culture medium with a biological sample to be tested;
- c) incubating the seeded culture medium; leaving it to incubate, and
- d) visualizing the presence of at least one color synonymous with the presence of at least one bacterium a microorganism or microorganisms of the Gram-negative type.

12. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein characterized in that, when the nitrogen in the 10-position of the acridine group is not quaternized, the presence of at least one aminopeptidase activity is visualized by adding an acid, preferably hydrochloric acid, acetic acid or citric acid, to the culture medium.

13. (New) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the acid is hydrochloric acid, acetic acid or citric acid.

14. (New) The culture medium as claimed in claim 6, further comprising at least one other enzyme substrate specific for an enzyme activity different from an aminopeptidase activity.

15. (New) A method for detecting at least one aminopeptidase activity in microorganisms, comprising:

- a) providing a culture medium as claimed in claim 14;
- b) seeding the culture medium with a biological sample to be tested;
- c) incubating the seeded culture medium;
- d) visualizing the presence of at least one aminopeptidase activity; and

e) visualizing the presence of at least one enzyme activity different from an aminopeptidase activity.

16. (New) The substrate as claimed in claim 1, wherein R₂ is alanine.

17. (New) The substrate as claimed in claim 1, wherein R₃, R₄, R₅ and R₆, are independently of one another, O-CH₃.

18. (New) The substrate as claimed in claim 2, wherein the L-alanine is coupled to a blocking agent.

19. (New) The substrate as claimed in claim 4, wherein the L-alanine is coupled to a blocking agent.